

Points for Mothers

Value of Kindergarten.
A woman who was supposed to be fairly intelligent was heard to say not long ago: "I was thinking of sending my little boy to Miss Robinson's kindergarten, but what is the use? The colored girl can amuse him just as well—and so much cheaper."

Shade of the blessed Friedrich Froebel! There is as wide a difference between the aimless and boisterous diversions improvised by the ignorant nurse and the scientific methods of the trained kindergarten as in the final results of Mr. Squeers' school and those of Arnold of Rugby.

It is only the unobservant part of the community that could misjudge the value of the "gifts" and "occupations," the names given by Froebel to the basis of the kindergarten idea. In these gifts and occupations the children see nothing but playthings, but it is surely inexcusable ignorance in this day of enlightenment on the subject, when the mothers of the children neither know nor perceive their underlying principles, and yet some persons think that telling a child the correct name of a thing in infancy is to threaten him with brain fever, just as they croak about young Sidis being a "soph" at Harvard at thirteen. And when it is explained that a box of blocks may illustrate the first principles of geometry to a child of five the untaught mother holds up her hands in horror.

But it is easy for the child to know the six sided blocks as cubes and more entertaining to form geometrical designs with them than to keep on making the "house that Jack built" just to topple over unendingly. Moreover, he comes to the difficult study of geometry in later years with a clearer understanding, because, having handled cubes, he has a sense perception of them, and, in verification of Pestalozzi's doctrine of object teaching as the scientific method in opposition to mere memory culture, the child has so handled them as to be perfectly familiar with their angles and relative proportions and readily comprehends the basis of a theorem in college days.

The kindergarten child comes, first of all, under the law of obedience, a law honored by children en masse, though naturally disregarded by them singly in their homes. Tiny as he is, he is called to order on the stroke of 9. Then he joins his companions in singing joyous songs of "good morning," making his little salutation to teachers and friends as he repeats the greeting. This is his beginning of courtliness in public. Then follows an hour of singing, each song containing within its sugar coating of sparkling tune some bit of observation about those things dear to the child heart—the sun, moon and stars; the birds, butterflies, flowers and animals; the sea and the mountains. Then follow the active games, the story telling, the clay modeling and the paper mat weaving, each having so much more meaning than lies on the surface.

While the kindergarten has, of course, long since become a necessary part of a child's training, from those nurtured in the lap of luxury to those who exist in the slums, it is a remarkable fact that few of these mothers have ever accompanied their children there, and those who have never seen a roomful of happy kindergarten children filling their morning hours with intelligently directed play have no idea how readily they form graphic and lasting mental pictures to the accompaniment of rhythmic movement when singing their lovely songs and making gestures and postures to illustrate their nor how, by means of absorbing modeling, the basic idea of the beauty and joy of construction as opposed to destructiveness may be awakened.

The Child's Appetite.
The child that comes home from school with little appetite for luncheon probably needs fresh air as much as anything else. Unless it shows signs of illness it is best to overlook the lack of appetite as much as possible for the first time, at any rate, and invent some excuse either for a walk or for some physical exercise in the open air. This exercise should be as natural as possible—a romp with the dog in the back yard, a game of ball with brother or sister or something of a like nature that will not suggest to the child that mother is worried about him. Don't, however, insist that he eat, as his lack of appetite may come from an overloaded stomach or one that is not doing its duty, and more food would only invite a real illness.

Baby's Airing.
Mothers must be careful in distinguishing between good and bad days for their babies to be out. The general principle is, of course, to give the baby an airing every day, because fresh air is as necessary to a child's health as good food is. But authorities agree that on certain kinds of days it is far better for baby to stay indoors. The point to beware of is dampness; not the temperature, but the quality of the air. A cold day is splendid for children provided it is the dry, stimulating kind of cold. But a damp, raw day will do them more harm than good. Even if it seems moderately warm don't take them out. It is the dampness that breeds chills and sore throat and croup.

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SENATOR VANCE'S WIT.

The Trick He Turned on a Rival in a Campaign Meeting.

The late Senator Vance used to say that his liveliest campaign for the governorship of North Carolina was that in which Judge Settle ran against him. They stumped the state in joint debate. All the white Democrats turned out to hear Vance and all the colored Republicans to hear Settle. On one occasion Vance was informed that some young ladies desired to testify their devotion to the Democratic party by kissing the Democratic candidate for governor. Nothing loath, Vance descended from the platform and kissed a dozen or so of the young beauties and then paused long enough to turn around toward his competitor and shout, "Settle, I'm kissing my girls; now kiss yours."

When he married the second time he said to his wife on their wedding day: "My dear, I'm a stubborn fellow, and you may anticipate trouble. Now, in the beginning, while I am submissive, I want to give you one piece of advice. If you follow it we'll get on mighty well. It is this: Make me do just as I damned please."

A newspaper man who was about starting for a rather out of the way portion of Vance's own state was asking him one day what kind of accommodation he was likely to find. "They'll give you some of their fried hog and eggs," the senator replied. "That's better than nothing," said the newspaper man. "I don't know—I don't know," the senator answered in a dubious tone. "I've tried both."—Argonaut.

KEEN SIGHTED GULLS.

Tests That Proved the Wonderful Vision of the Birds.

There is perhaps no other bird of land or sea so keen of sight as the common gull. To convince a skeptical friend of this, an American naturalist once made some interesting experiments.

The two men were passengers on a steamer where the spring ebb aided them to run twenty miles an hour. A dozen gulls followed them in the steamer's wake without apparent effort and circled in graceful curves over the water.

Breaking a cracker biscuit into four parts less than an inch square each, the naturalist handed one piece to his friend and told him to drop it into the seething waters on the starboard.

Immediately the bit of biscuit became invisible to human eyes, and yet before it had gone thirty yards astern a gull detected it, and dipping into the foam, secured it. One by one it picked up the other bits of biscuit, though neither of the two men could see them.

Tearing off a postage stamp from an old envelope, the naturalist dropped it overboard. The gull detected the waif and made as if to pick it up. But when within a yard or so of it the bird saw that it was nothing in his line and glided upward again to his favorite station on a line with the topmost track.—New York Tribune.

Bizet's Red Ribbon.

Bizet, the author of the popular opera "Carmen," who died a month after its first production, was not at any time a lucky man. He was even decorated through a mistake, says a writer. "For his friends, presaging the failure of 'Carmen,' bombarded the minister before the production and begged a decoration for M. George Bizet. 'Bizet?' asked the minister. 'Who is Bizet?' 'A remarkable genius,' was the reply, 'who has already produced several extraordinarily fine works. Among them the most popular is perhaps 'L'Arlésienne.'" "L'Arlésienne?" interrupted the minister. "Why, it is a perfectly fascinating book. I read it with extreme pleasure. Tell your friends that the thing is done." The minister was not musical, but he had read a novel by Alphonse Daudet, and Bizet won his red ribbon.

Real Chivalry.

Men passengers in the old horse omnibuses of years ago had greater opportunities than at present of showing their politeness to women, especially on wet nights. One remembers the conductor's request as he swung his dripping form from the "monkey board" to the doorway.

"Will any gentleman ride outside to oblige a woman?" And there was always the gentleman whose chivalry prompted him to give up his seat, climb the steep steps to the "knife board" on top and complete his journey in the pouring rain.—London Standard.

Nature.

Nature is the armory of genius. Cities serve it poorly, books and colleges at second hand. The eye craves the spectacle of the horizon, of mountain, ocean, river and plain, the clouds and stars, actual contact with the elements, sympathy with the seasons as they rise and roll.—Alcott.

One Idea of Entertainment.

"Isn't that Mrs. Templeton-Brown the most entertaining creature?" "I noticed the crowd around her. What was she talking about?" "Why, about the awful things that happened to her when she was in the hospital."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Only Fault.

"Is your husband a good man?" "Yes. He's a good man. I can't complain. But he always sneaks out the back way whenever the minister calls."—Washington Herald.

What the superior man seeks is in himself. What the small man seeks is in others.—Confucius.

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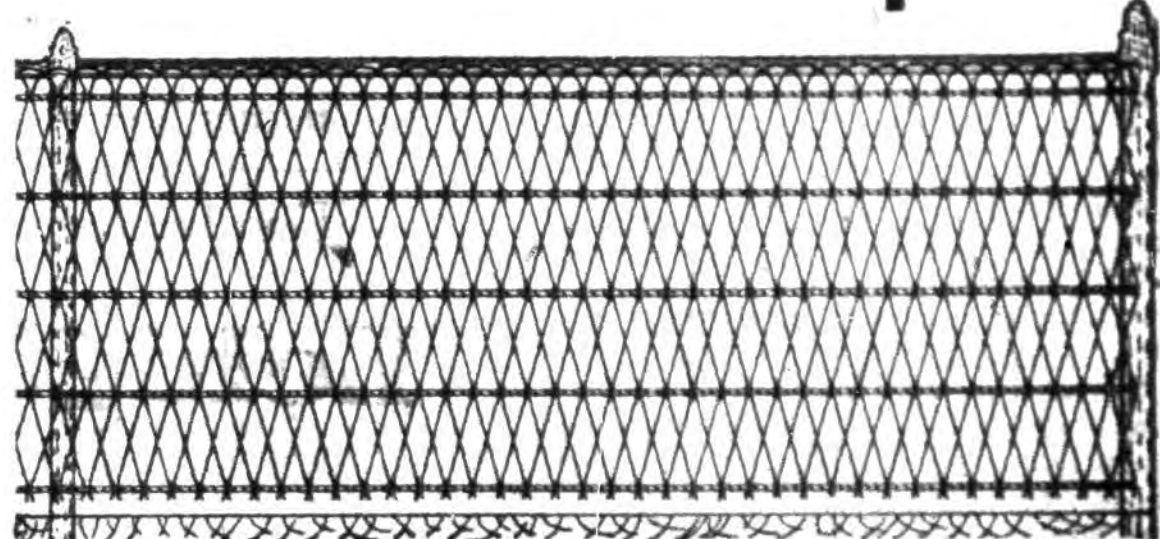
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